

Climate Action Addingham Note

Pollinator Friendly Grassland Management – strategy for Addingham 2022 to 2023

1. Introduction

Addingham Environment Group's work over the last five years with the Parish Council, Bradford Council and other landowners in the village has shown the benefits of changing the way amenity grassland and road verges are managed.

The management regimes adopted follow the best practice guidance developed by Plantlife produced in collaboration with Natural England, highway and local authorities, Butterfly Conservation and the Wildlife Trusts as part of the UK Government's National Pollinator Strategy. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-england>.

Our village bee and butterfly surveys, show that the two areas which have been under a one late cut and collect the arisings regime for longest (Old Station Way Meadow and the Skipton Road Bank) are becoming more floristically diverse and are attracting greater numbers of bees and butterflies, compared to areas of amenity grassland where the grass is mown through the summer and the sward kept very short.

Not only does changing the management in this way assist nature recovery, energy is saved and the carbon footprint of operations reduced.



2. Management capacity

Bradford Council's Parks team is increasingly geared up to provide a 'cut and collect' maintenance regime, and to work flexibly and productively with community groups and Parish Councils.

For instance, at Old Station Way meadow BMDC cut and collect the arisings from the later summer/autumn cut. Last summer they were responsive to the APC request to cut a wider sightline margin, when growing conditions required this in July

AEG has an experienced and dedicated volunteer workforce for tasks such as grass raking on slopes too steep for BMDC 'cut and collect' machinery (e.g. on the Skipton Rd bank and Gala Field bank). With a grant from the Beer Festival AEG, now has a small scything team. In summer 2021 part of the Methodist Graveyard was cut by scythe as a trial and we will have the capacity to cut more areas going forward. AEG is also buying a cordless strimmer with funds from a recent Bradford Council grant.

A critical operation in managing wildflower meadows is the control of invasive weeds especially docks and thistles. AEG volunteers regularly remove these deep-rooted plants using specially designed tools donated to the group by the Bee Together Project.

3. AEG new projects for 2022

In addition to the seven wildflower and pollinator areas AEG is helping to manage, two new areas will be added:

1. A new wildflower area at the front of the Primary School. This is a joint project with The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust 'Bee Together' project, the School and AEG.

2. St Peter's Church. We have been invited by St Peter's to discuss the management of Church Field with them. Except for grass paths, the intention is to delay cutting the field until the middle of July.

AEG is also increasingly being asked for advice on wildflower meadow creation and management by private landowners both in the village and in the surrounding farmland.

4. Parish Council landholdings

In areas where a short sward is not required for specific sports/recreational activities, we suggest that management should move towards a more relaxed mowing regime based on the following principles:

- Leave areas of longer grass around the margins adjacent to hedgerows, and cut at the end of the summer
- An early cut and collect (in March/early April) mow across the site if conditions allow
- No mowing through May, and preferably June to let herb species which may be in the sward (such as clovers, yarrow, selfheal, trefoils, speedwells and vetches) flower and better support bees, butterflies and other pollinators
- Cut grass paths through where necessary for access, and do a full cut in July or earlier where needed in areas of heavier use e.g. picnic areas/play areas/areas for informal ball games etc.

Specific Proposals for 2022

- Widen the grass margin along the eastern boundary of HWF to 2 m (currently 1 m)
- Trial a relaxed mowing regime for the rest of HWF (explore if BMDC can do an early cut and collect cut across the whole field, no mowing May, extending into June, depending on the season, regular cut through July & August, preferably with grass collected)
- Trial a relaxed mowing regime (no cuts in May/June) for The Green & Sugar Hill. At Sugar Hill leave the bank at the rear uncut and a wider uncut margin on the east side.

Proposals for 2023

- Introduce a relaxed mowing regime at Silsden Rd. Recreation Ground
- Explore the scope for changing the management of other APC land e.g. the paddock on Turner Lane, allotment paths.

5. Amenity grass verges at the edges of the village

Move towards encouraging BMDC to manage these in a more pollinator and wildlife friendly way, while making sure sightlines are maintained.

Proposals for 2022/2023

- In 2022 - organise site visits with BMDC/APC and the BeeTogether project to look at the verges and draw up proposals for each one
- Trial the plans in 2023.

6. Lawns throughout the village

Promote the Plantlife 'No Mow May' campaign at the CAA launch. See:
<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may>

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